described herein, such that at least one o-ring removal tool engages a plurality of o-ring removal slots to remove the o-ring 22.

[0028] Referring now to Figure 5, the o-ring removal slot 20 is employed in a sealing member 26 in yet another form of the present invention, wherein the o-ring removal slot 20 adjoins a shoulder 28 rather than an o-ring groove 12 as previously described. As shown, the o-ring 22 is disposed against the shoulder 28 to seal an interface between the sealing member 26 and an adjacent sealing member (not shown). Accordingly, the o-ring removal slot 20 provides access for removal of the o-ring 22. Additionally, the o-ring removal slot 20 is approximately perpendicular to the o-ring shoulder 28, although other orientations, such as a spiral that adjoins the shoulder 28 at an angle, may be employed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention. Furthermore, the o-ring removal slot 20 may have a constant or non-constant depth, which is sized according to the specific application so as to maintain the sealing integrity of the o-ring 22.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims in accordance with the following rewritten claims in clean form. Applicant includes herewith an Attachment for Claim Amendments showing a marked up version of each amended claim in which underlines indicate insertions and brackets indicate deletions.

6. (Amended) The pin of Claim 1, wherein the o-ring removal slot further comprises chamfered edges.

12. (Amended) The negative lead gas carrying pin of Claim 10, wherein the housing is a plug housing connected to a torch lead of the plasma arc cutting apparatus.

18. (Amended) A sealing member comprising:

a distal end defining a cylindrical portion;

an o-ring groove disposed around the cylindrical portion; and

an o-ring removal slot adjoining the o-ring groove,

wherein the o-ring removal slot provides access for removal of an o-ring disposed within the o-ring groove.

36. (New) A sealing member comprising:

an o-ring groove disposed within the sealing member, the o-ring groove defining a substantially constant width; and

an o-ring removal slot adjoining the o-ring groove,

wherein the o-ring removal slot provides access for removal of an o-ring disposed within the o-ring groove.

37. (New) A connector comprising:

a plug housing; and

a pin disposed within the plug housing, the pin comprising:

a distal end defining a cylindrical portion;

an o-ring groove disposed around the cylindrical portion; and

an o-ring removal slot adjoining the o-ring groove,